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THE MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

by Bonner Fellers

When ratified by the governments of France and the Netherlands, which are about to act, the North Atlantic Treaty will stand, side by side with the Constitution, as the supreme law of the United States. The 81st Congress must now pass upon the President's military assistance program. In the language of the Department of State, this program is "separate and distinct from the North Atlantic Treaty".

It is the view of the State Department, however, that Western Europeans need, as a gift from the United States, military equipment "adequate to control internal disorders and to convince an aggressor that he would pay dearly for any attempt to cross their borders". It is further argued that confidence in Western Europe "is based on the belief that through the North Atlantic Pact security from external aggression can be attained". But, "the preponderant military power which could be brought to bear upon an aggressor is centered in the United States, 3,000 miles from Western Europe". So, the State Department concludes: "We cannot count on our friends in Western Europe to resist if our strategy in the event of war is to abandon those friends to the enemy with a promise of later liberation."

In the interests of the American people, and in fairness to our Allies, the Congress will do well to ponder objectively and professionally every implication of the President's military assistance program.

II

The North Atlantic Treaty, in itself, has enormous psychological value. It is the symbol of unity and determination of the Western Powers to resist aggression from a source which President Truman now openly defines as Soviet Russia. But there are grave implications in the proposed military implementation.

It would prove disastrous to send weapons to peoples whose governments are likely to change so radically that our weapons might be used against us. Nor would it be in keeping with American traditions to supply European governments with weapons which might be used against colonial peoples.

The peoples of Western Europe are understandably fearful of being overrun by the Red Army. The type of military equipment which they want

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traces back to a frantic desire to hold the Rhine, possibly the Elbe, with tanks, artillery, machine guns and bayonets, with air support. They know that only by successful ground combat can invasion be prevented. Being desperate, and very human, they rely heavily upon the United States to help. But a realistic appraisal of the combat effectiveness of the potential aggressor, as opposed to that of our Allies, discloses the futility of the strategy.

In the last war -- before lend lease -- eleven million Red soldiers, equipped entirely by Soviet industry, were thrown against the Nazi attack. When the war ended, Stalin was using 502 Red Army divisions to push Hitler back into Germany, while on the Western Front the Allied strength was 91 divisions, of which 63 were American.

The purpose of the military assistance program, we are told, is to warn Soviet Russia that we mean business. Let us look at Mr. Stalin's always logical reaction. In view of his vast Red Army he will scarcely be impressed with any peacetime Allied ground force mobilized on the Rhine. While, for political purposes, he may oppose American military assistance to Europe, he surely rejoices in its economic consequences.

There are other factors favoring Russia. Her great allies are distance, winter and manpower. Russia without its satellites is nearly three times the area of the United States. Russian winters are so severe that Americans and Western Europeans cannot stand them. Russia has an inexhaustible supply of manpower, which its leadership deems expendible.

Terrain favors Russia. Europe is actually a tapering peninsula on Russia's western frontier. As armies advance westward the front narrows, the road and rail nets become more dense, the climate milder, and the Atlantic puts a stop to further retreat. But as armies move eastward the front rapidly widens, from 750 miles between the Baltic and Black Seas to 2,000 miles from Murmansk to Caucasia. The road and rail nets thin out. Winter immobilizes ground action. And for 6,000 miles there are no barriers to an eastward retreat.

To present even reasonably effective discouragement to the Red Army would require a peacetime garrison of at least 60 divisions. Since the cost of one division, from inception to combat readiness, is about $400 million, the financing of such a force, even without tactical air support, would approximate $24 billion. Were this country to furnish its proportionate share of troops we would certainly need Universal Military Training, with all its moral and material cost.

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Even if our Allies had all the American equipment needed, they could never hold against the Red Army. It would be less than honest if the United States Government were to endeavor to hoodwink them into believing they could hold. It would be less than honest to permit our Allies to believe that our assistance will do the job.

Nevertheless, inherent in the proposed military assistance program is the constant risk, which I presume we have calculated, that Stalin will be tempted to strike the Allied Rhine forces at a time when his occupation of Western Europe would be quick and certain. The Treaty binds the United States to assist. Our resultant losses would be enormous. The American people would recoil in horror, and then belatedly examine the quality of our leadership.

III

Fortunately, there is a brighter side to the picture. The United States has a powerful deterrent to aggression. It is our atomic bombs and the long-range bombers which can deliver them. This, and not our ground and sea forces, is the one threat which impresses Stalin. Russia's eternal allies, distance, winter and manpower, are impotent against air power. From World War II, air power emerged as the greatest striking force known to warfare. So long as we maintain the lead in bombs and bombers, this war deterrent is likely to continue effective.

Against the active opposition of the Administration, the 80th Congress approved a 70-group Air Force program. Now a cut back to 48 groups is contemplated. It seems that the $1.45 billion initial military assistance program, plus the $15 billion current defense budget of our own, total more than we can afford. The future security of this country hinges on how the essential cut is made.

We can achieve national security, and at the same time cut expenditures, if we create a tailor-made force to meet the combat characteristics of our designated enemy. The formula is simple, yet the Defense establishment has not so far found it: The best Air Force in the world supported by an adequate Army and Navy. Since Russia is immeasurably strong on land we must avoid large-scale ground combat. A ponderous and expensive ground force, therefore, is unnecessary. Russia has only a small fleet; our Navy is exceedingly powerful.

For the present, therefore, we can hold back on Army expenditures; we can safely skimp the Navy budget. But Russia has announced that she will build the most powerful Air Force in the world. And our Moscow observers recently have been deeply impressed by the progress already

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apparent. It is vital to the survival of the United States that we retrieve and maintain air supremacy.

The use of air power as the striking force, supported by ground and sea forces, is in keeping with the necessity of economy. An annual expenditure of $6 billion for the Air Force, $3.5 billion for the Army and $2.5 billion for the Navy would, within five years, place us in a position to insure the peace of the world. This is a total of twelve billion as against fifteen in the present budget. This we can afford. It is a drastic cut for Army and Navy, but this is no time to let tradition and sentiment overshadow the proved trends in strategy.

IV

The placing of our principal reliance in air power would not mean that the United States is abandoning the Western European peoples. Since the attempt to hold the Rhine would be futile, it might actually be better to permit the Red Army to occupy Europe than to suffer the devastation which inevitably follows in the wake of tanks and guns and bombs. One more sweep of ground forces locked in combat across Europe would be all too likely to end its civilization permanently.

To Stalin, the peaceful occupation of Western Europe is actually a war deterrent. There his Red soldiers would see a way of life, a freedom, a dignity of the individual beyond their widest stretch of imagination. Never again would they submit with docility to totalitarianism.

The proposed military assistance program places the State Department in the role of determining military strategy, in that it has invited our Allies to requisition military equipment to hold their frontiers. Assistance to this program commits us to ground combat should war come. The situation parallels Pearl Harbor. It was a diplomatic rather than a naval decision that the fleet be stationed at Honolulu to deter Japanese aggression. Then the Hawaiian Commanders were not advised that an attack was imminent. The proposed Administration program could lead to far greater humiliation than the Pearl Harbor debacle.

The task of the 81st Congress is to make sure that our Allies understand precisely what help we intend and do not intend to give them. We must not be placed where we can be accused of welching on the Treaty. Clearly the Administration has not found the formula for lasting peace. Its failure magnifies the responsibility of Congress.

Brigadier General Bonner Fellers (ret'd), West Point 1918, DSM with oak leaf cluster, was Military Observer with the British in Africa (1940-42) and on General MacArthur's staff as a Ground Officer (1943-46).

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Not Merely Gossip *A Supplement to* Human Events Vol. VI, No. 30

AUG 2

By Frank C. Hanighen July 27, 1949

CARDINAL SPELLMAN AND MRS. ROOSEVELT: We cannot agree with either the Cardinal or Mrs. Roosevelt in their controversy over Federal aid to education. Mrs. Roosevelt, of course, stands for increasingly large gulps at the public trough, for Federal education and virtually everything else. In her curious political philosophy, Federal aid to education is a necessary part of the Welfare State, and the bigger that kind of State, the better. One may dismiss as flapdoodle her pretentious demand for "separation of Church and State". If Eleanor's Welfare State could lay its hands on the Catholic or any other church, we would hear precious little talk about "separation". And right here is where we differ with the Cardinal. We can well understand and sympathize with his feeling that it is unfair to exclude parochial schools from Federal money appropriated for buses, and non-sectarian textbooks. But thereby he is committing himself, whether he realizes it or not, to Federal aid to education, both public and parochial. Let the State take in this additional field of education and Cardinal Spellman will find that his troubles have multiplied many-fold. In this age of statism, we see no reason why the State would modestly abstain from trying to control the Church, especially when the State has the excuse, "he who pays the piper calls the tune".

It seems to us that the New York prelate made a better case when he charged that Mrs. Roosevelt is anti-Catholic. We marvel at all the shocked expressions of surprise at this statement, for we have thought the same right along for many years. Monsignor Cartwright of Washington (who added his criticism to that of the Cardinal) pointed out that "My Day" has contained many items of an anti-Catholic nature, such as the echoing of the widely-spread Communist canard that Mindzenty was Fascist and anti-Semitic. We would imagine that the Washington prelate would agree with us that Mrs. Roosevelt's anti-Catholicism is simply part of her fellow travellerism -- and that she would change her tune, if the "line" were changed. It is surprising that the Scripps-Howard chain of papers, which editorially has been alert to the Communist and fellow traveller maneuvers, has remained blind to what this lady columnist, whom they publish, has been up to.

We are rather amused at the deafening silence in political quarters about this whole episode. Outwardly, the politicos take no notice of this. Privately, their discussions are intense -- agonizing for the Democrats, pleasing for the Republicans. We have heard such questions as the following: Has this killed Lehman's chances for Senatorial nomination? Will the Democrats turn to young Bob Wagner? What will this do to the ambitions of young Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr.? Will the GOP have the wit to nominate Wild Bill Donovan? All these questions, we hasten to remark, are fraught with the same passionate considerations -- race and religion -- which unfortunately continue to bedevil our politics.

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TRADE WITH SPAIN: President Truman recently described Spain as an "unfriendly" nation, the Export-Import Bank called the country a bad "credit risk" for a loan, and Secretary Acheson pictured our gallant allies in Western Europe as maintaining a highly frigid attitude toward the pariah in the Iberian Peninsula. Yet, lo! this week there are indications that U. S. and French business interests refuse to consider Spain a complete moral leper. We learn from reliable sources that Anderson, Clayton and Company have just arranged a $10 million credit to Spain for the purchase of cotton. This credit, unlike the recent loan to Spain by the Chase Bank, is

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not backed by gold collateral. It is an unsecured credit, pure and simple. In other words this prominent firm which knows a thing or two about the credit standing of customers has deemed Spain a "good risk". Moreover, it is worth recalling that this is the firm of Mr. Will Clayton, who in recent years served as Assistant Secretary of State in charge of foreign trade and economic affairs. Mr. Clayton either fails to understand his private business, or he definitely disagrees with the State Department and Export-Import Bank. Cotton circles say this credit is the trade's gesture of defiance against what they consider a foolish Government policy. Cotton interests want to sell cotton and are mindful that the great textile center of Barcelona is one of the biggest markets for cotton in Europe.

Also, French bankers are reportedly negotiating a 15 billion franc loan with Spain for industrial equipment. This is not the only evidence that democratic countries do not consider Spain an economic liability. Senator Eastland in the Senate (July 25) described the active business that both Britain and France have been doing with Spain. All in all, it looks as if the keener struggle for markets will ere long break down the strange political coventry in which Spain has been kept for the past three years.

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ECA "EXPERT": Every now and then, we hear a shrill chorus among certain elements in the Capital protesting attacks on Government officials. These elements claim that the officials have left private business to take their government jobs, "at great personal sacrifice" and they ought to be treated gently by the press. An amusing exchange in the ECA Senate hearings revealed some of the hollowness in such arguments. On Tuesday, June 21, Mr. Paul Hoffman testifying before the Appropriations sub-committee brought forward one of his "bleeding-heart" witnesses in the ECA, Philip Levy. Here is the colloquy:

"SENATOR FERGUSON: For whom were you working before you went to Socony-Vacuum? MR. LEVY: I was with the State Department. FERGUSON: How long have you been with Socony-Vacuum? LEVY: I had just left the Government and Mr. Hoffman requested me to come back. FERGUSON: How long have you been with Socony? Five or six months? LEVY: Yes. FERGUSON: You were in the Government before that? LEVY: Six years. FERGUSON: And you were with Socony-Vacuum for 5 or 6 months? LEVY: After leaving the Government. FERGUSON: What did you do in the Government? LEVY: I was in the OSS, in charge of the petroleum work under the Joints Chiefs of Staff. FERGUSON: Did you have any interest in private oil enterprise before that? LEVY: No. FERGUSON: Any experience at all? LEVY: I worked in a petroleum press and economic office for many years. FERGUSON: Economically you developed yourself in the Government and went with Socony-Vacuum for five or six months? LEVY: I was working for a petroleum newspaper. . . . MR. PAUL HOFFMAN: I assure you that Mr. Levy has spent these 15 months down here at a great personal sacrifice, and if he will take what he can make over $50,000 a year outside of the Government when he leaves us I will underwrite that for him. SENATOR WHERRY: If there is any one man in the United States that could underwrite anything, you can certainly do it. . . . Senator Robertson qualifies him as an expert but here it turns out he has been working with Socony-Vacuum only 5 or 6 months."

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PROFITS: Mr. Robert Nathan, the economist representing the CIO, is clamoring for a fourth round of wage increases, and with many statistics about profits and how the bosses can more than afford it. It is reported that the well-publicized campaign now under way is but the prelude to a number of Nathan treatises on low wages and sky-high profits. In this connection, one might well cushion the shock of the

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Nathan bombardment by a perusal of an interesting pamphlet Inflation and Postwar Profits, recently published by the Machinery and Allied Products Institute. Mr. William J. Kelly, President of MAPI, in introducing the work says that government and labor union economists have fostered a "myth of high corporate profits" which threatens American technological advancement.

This excellent brochure lays great stress on the necessity for taking into account higher inventory and replacement costs, a subject loftily ignored by Government and Labor economists. And it makes some telling points, as follows: First, the average of corporate profits in ten "representative good years" in the analyzed period (1909-48) was 9 per cent of national income and 6 per cent of sales; but in not one of the post-war years, 1946-48, did they reach this average. Second, post-war corporate profits, corrected for rising inventory costs and rising cost of equipment replacement, were lower in relation to national income and sales than in any previous year of peacetime production and high employment. Next, the replacement costs of inventory and fixed assets have exceeded by 60 per cent, or more than $19 billion, the funds set aside for such purposes by American corporations in the three-year post-war period, 1946-48. "The myth of high corporate profits", said Mr. Kelly, "has been built up by those who have failed to take into consideration and to make clear that the corporation's dollars are inflated like all others, and by others who have made invalid comparisons, particularly with years of low production and employment." (We might add that the U. S. Chamber of Commerce has also made some good studies in this field.)

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BRITISH AND BELGIAN ECONOMIC POLICIES: Too many dispatches from London give the erroneous impression that the English place all the blame for their present economic plight on the U.S.A. Actually, most of the London newspapers we have seen say it is the fault of their own Government whose policy they compare unfavorably with the constructive measures of other foreign governments. For instance, Mr. Norman Crump, one of Fleet Street's best writers on finance, has this to say in the Sunday Times (July 10): "The plain truth is that we have wasted the fat years of the seller's market, and now that the lean years are upon us we find ourselves living beyond our means. It is no answer for Sir Stafford Cripps to point to our capital expenditure and 'uninterrupted progress' during the past two years. Other countries have done as much or more, and nevertheless are in better shape than we are to meet the world recession of today.

"Take the case of Belgium. Last October, the value of her exports was 92 per cent of the value of her imports. By last March the percentage had risen to 107. This was mainly due to a marked increase in her exports. If it is asked how she has done it, one must go back to her drastic currency reform immediately after her liberation. This laid the foundations of her economic recovery. Since then her people have worked with a will. There is officially a 48-hour week, spread over six days, but there is a general readiness to work overtime. Her people know that the more they produce the more they will be able to buy for themselves. She is now reaping the reward of her exertions. Her wholesale price index remained steady during most of 1948, but during the first quarter of this year it fell by about 5 per cent. Her cost-of-living index also reached its peak last September and has since been slowly but steadily declining. In other words her prices, this year, have followed the world downward trend, while ours have failed to do so. It is true that Belgium has a moderate amount of unemployment; last March it was 8.6 per cent. But we are learning that full employment also has its evils. Moreover, if lack of gold and dollars forces us to reduce our raw material imports, what is our degree of employment likely to be? We had a foretaste three winters ago, when there was a temporary shortage of fuel. This fall in our gold reserves is a plain warning that we must put our internal affairs in order."

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Book Events

American Argument, by Pearl S. Buck with Eslanda Goode Robeson. New York: John Day Company. $3.00. Reviewed by William Henry Chamberlin.

Anti-American Argument might have been a better title for this book. For American political and American institutions and ideas are subjected to violent attack by Mrs. Robeson and get very feeble and faltering defense from Mrs. Buck. Mrs. Robeson is the wife of the famous singer, Paul Robeson, whose talent in his art is combined with what must be a world's record for joining Communist front organizations. There is, to be sure, some pattern of argument in the book. Eslanda Robeson is a vehement, dogmatically convinced collectivist. Pearl Buck is an apologetic, defensive individualist. So on this very important issue of individualism versus statism one gets the impression of a sham verbal conflict because Mrs. Buck does not seem to know how good her case is.

Mrs. Robeson might not recognize the phrase; but she is in sympathy with Rousseau's conception of the volonté générale, that mystical overriding popular will which the Jacobins invoked as justification for setting up the guillotine as the most effective means of dealing with dissenters. When the two women get around to Russia, Mrs. Robeson discusses the subject in an atmosphere of dogmatic ignorance and fellow traveler euphemisms and clichés. Mrs. Buck offers timid reservations which are largely vitiated because of her obvious lack of precise factual knowledge.

Mrs. Robeson is quite ready to take "liquidation" in her stride. "I'm not so afraid of liquidation as you are", she says. "I regret it, of course, I would avoid it if I possibly could. I like dogs, but I wouldn't hesitate one moment to liquidate a mad dog." Just who is to decide the rather important question of who is to be the liquidator and who is to be the liquidatee and who is fair game as a "mad dog" remains obscure. There is the further suggestion from Mrs. Robeson that it would be an improvement "to switch over to a good dictatorship, in order to make things more democratic". Here, of course, is the supposed justification for every totalitarian regime since World War I; Lenin's and Stalin's, Hitler's, Mussolini's and all their minor satellites and imitators.

No reasonable person will dispute that American Negroes and Americans of Mexican, Oriental and other ethnic strains sometimes suffer from unjust discriminatory treatment. But she very much overstates the case in this field. She never asks herself, and Mrs. Buck never asks her, why, if Negroes and other "minorities" are so desperately badly off in America, they do not pack up and move to the Soviet Union where liquidation and everything else are so admirably ordered, in Mrs. Robeson's opinion. Whatever may be America's faults, it is not and never has been a jail or a concentration camp for its own citizens. One of the many missed points in this informal dialogue is that, apart from the Negroes, who were the victims of a great historical wrong -- the legalization of human slavery -- every other "minority" group came to America of its own free will and, by and large, found better conditions and more opportunities here than it left behind.

Pearl Buck is less dogmatic than Eslanda Robeson. But her mind seems to operate in a haze of wishful thinking and high sounding phrases and she overworks intuition as a substitute for precise knowledge. It is a mere stab in the dark to suggest that all our troubles began because we sent "little men" to the San Francisco Conference. Equally wide of the mark is her thought that "the Third World War began with Churchill's speech at Fulton, Missouri". There was a rather long series of Soviet aggressive actions that preceded this speech.

This book is more valuable for the dissent it should inspire in readers with reasonable knowledge of the American scene and the world situation than for any contribution it makes to objective understanding of either.

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